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ABSTRACT

This document presents some notes on the special study on operating support for the emerging universities in Ontario. That report is an attempt to sketch some guidelines for determining a point of emergence for new universities in Ontario, and to propose a grant formula that might serve as a guide in establishing grants to emerging universities. Matters that appear to relate to all Ontario universities are discussed first in the present report, while the second section pertains particularly to the emergent universities, and includes individual statements by Brock and Trent Universities. The third section of the notes comments briefly on some of the assumptions upon which the model for developing operating support is based. See also HE 003 535. (HS)

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NOTES

ON

THE SPECIAL STUDY ON OPERATING SUPPORT FOR THE EMERGING UNIVERSITIES IN ONTARIO FOR FISCAL YEAR 1968/69, PREPARED FOR ONTARIO COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS, JULY 1968

Introduction

Matters which appear to relate to all Ontario Universities are discussed first, while the second section pertains particularly to the emergent universities, and includes individual statements by Brock and Trent Universities.

The third section of the notes comments briefly on some of the assumptions upon which the model is based.

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Part I - Points of Interest for all Universities

The authors of the Special Study state on the first page of the appendix that "while the focus of the discussion is on emerging institutions, the models are applicable to segments of emerged universities also".

At least three statements are made in the Study which will be welcomed by all members of the Ontario University community:

1) " ... if ... financing proceeded as tentatively recommended, Lakehead University could experience a net reduction in effective income in the next two or three years. This would obviously be quite intolerable." (Page 7)

2) "It is generally accepted that at least four people are needed to staff a department offering an undergraduate programme". (Page 10)

3) "We take it as fundamental that a good deal of research, scholarly activity and creative activity are taking place in all institutions of higher learning". (Page A 24)

However, in connection with this third point, a little further down the page we read, "We do not accept the view that graduate students are necessary for all or even most research and scholarship and creative activities by university faculty

members". A comment on this statement, in view of the financial picture facing an Arts and Science university at emergence, appears later in these notes.

The authors of the Study state that a three-course load is typical for an undergraduate Arts and Science operation, and on page A 3 they add that with such a load the basic course commitment of faculty members during two terms of the academic year is 26.5 hours per week (lectures 9 hours, course preparation 13.5 hours, office work 4 hours). Three hours per week laboratory are regarded as equivalent to one hour per week of lectures (page A 2).

There are two interesting references to Master's degree work. The first appears on page 14 and refers to the emergent universities: "The repetition of the Honours degree - General degree pattern found in many of the older universities is a common feature, rather than experimentation with new patterns of General degrees, joint Honours course arrangements and any new pattern of Master's degrees". Again on page A 1: "We realize that there are powerful intellectural, academic and manpower forces suggesting that the relationship between the General B.A. and B.Sc., the Honours baccalaureate and the M.A. or M.Sc. programme be reexamined -- perhaps with a more attractive mix of General Bachelor's degrees and Master's degrees substituting to a considerable extent for the present Honours degree programme".

The latter quotation in particular seems to carry some important implications for the four-year programme in Ontario. It also carries implications for the Appraisals Procedure of Graduate work to the Master's level.

Finally one is struck by the lack of any reference to the problem of massive first-year classes, particularly in the Social Sciences. It seems clear that the relatively poor arrangements made by universities in general to accommodate these large Social Sciences enrolments are to a considerable degree responsible for the student and faculty unrest which is sweeping our universities. This is a problem which cannot readily be dealt with within the context of formal models, because the models assume some average type of distribution of students throughout departments, and some rational development of departmental faculty numbers in terms of undergraduate student numbers. Neither of these assumptions is valid in the situation in the Social Sciences that is currently facing universities.

Part II'- The Emergent Universities

General

Throughout the Study reference is made to the facts that the new universities can and should emerge within the next few years. For example, on page 14: "The emerging institutions can achieve high quality, good experimentation with new programmes and courses, academic attractiveness and financial viability on formula income, and soon, we believe".

On page A 3 this repeatedly stated feeling is expressed quantitatively and it is made clear that emergence should be attainable in the view of the authors with an enrolment of about 1800 students. In discussing this conclusion the authors of the Study quote the report of the Batke Committee suggesting that an institution might not be considered as emerged until it reached the size of nearly 4000 students. It is also recorded that some of the state systems in the United States treat the point of transition from a college to a university as occurring at 4500 to 5000 students.

In favour of the 1800 student figure, the Study refers to experience in a variety of (unidentified) liberal arts colleges, but makes no mention of the far-reaching, costly, but basically unsuccessful attempts which have been made over the past several years by the National Science Foundation to revitalize the science offerings of the liberal arts colleges

in the U.S.A.

This view of the emergent universities as equivalent to the liberal arts colleges is stated in extreme form on page 6: "There are also numerous examples of Faculties of Arts and Science (at least comparable in scope of activity to the newer universities) which operate effectively on simple formula support, without very large enrolments".

But the Faculty of Arts and Science in the large 'multiversity' does not carry the full administrative overhead of the university, the full cost of the engineers' office, the full cost of the librarian and the library support staff, the full cost of faculty research, and so on. For these practical reasons, if for no others, the comparison is invalid.

Mention is also made of recent and current experience of some of the universities in Ontario not receiving special emergence grants. The Study claims that "This experience shows effective operation of multi-faculty universities with fewer than 3000 students without extra support." (Page 6). No reference is made to Ontario Universities with enrolments of 2500 students or greater which, in fact, receive extra formula support.

Another matter concerns the statements to the effect that the newer universities have been somewhat unimaginative in their academic approach. While this may in some sense be

a valid criticism, it must be remarked that the evident predilection within the Department and Committee on University Affairs for the "systems" approach, combined with external influences such as entrance requirements of graduate schools, and the financial limitations imposed by the rapidly diminishing emergence grants, makes the establishment of educational departure difficult in the extreme for the emergent universities. When such constraints are fully considered, it may be concluded that the newer universities have made a major contribution in experimenting with and establishing new departures in university education in Ontario and in Canada.

As a cited example of this lack of creativity: "Honours programmes have been offered in forms and fields in which there is clear evidence of redundancy in the Province, while new programmes have not been offered" (page 14). This statement is doubtless true, but can hardly form the basis of a fair critical comment. If the new universities are to avoid academic trivia and esoteric inessentials, it seems clear that some overlap with the Arts and Science undergraduate courses offered by the universities of Toronto, Queens, and Western, to name just three, is unavoidable.

Brock

The Report suggests (p. 9) that what it assumes to be the teaching loads "must be regarded as very light even after making allowance for the development of new courses in a University", and adds that "even with an average load of 3 courses there should be ample opportunity for individual faculty research and for participation in planning and administrative tasks".

It may be noted that in all large first-year classes at Brock, and in a number of courses for second-year credit, each student spends at least one hour a week in a seminar group of not more than 15 students. Full-time faculty members spend at least four hours, frequently six, in seminar groups of this kind, which are considered to be an important part of the teaching function. Added to this, and when considering the opportunity for individual faculty research, it is important to remember that much of the University's work is carried out in quarters which are improvised, rather than designed as permanent space, and that an operation on two campuses, physically separated, involves an inevitable lag in time and in transit.

Moreover, the University, by many standards, has been short of middle-range administrative manpower, which has meant

that a heavy portion of the planning and administrative load has had to be assumed, and willingly, by faculty members.

In reply to the claim made in the Report (p. 14) that, by and large, the emerging universities "have not been as innovative as might have been hoped", Brock would like to draw attention to

- its drama programme, linked with language and literature, first in English, and extending progressively to French, German, Spanish, Russian and Italian.
- its modern science programme for students whose main academic interests lie in fields other than science.
- its joint honours programmes (e.g. history and philosophy; philosophy and mathematics; English and French; physics, economics and planning; politics, economics, ecology and planning).
- its Grade 12 Summer Programme (see below).

We do not see how honours programmes can be held to be redundant if related to the preparation of secondary school teachers. At Brock, we have been trying to devise and shape honours programmes which will have a special relevance and interest for teachers, at whatever level, against the day when all certified teachers will be required to hold a university qualification.

So far as graduate work is concerned, it should be noted that new patterns in Master's degrees would be encouraged by a more forthright statement by the Committee on University Affairs itself, whether by way of implementation of those recommendations of the Spinks Commission related especially to the interests of emerging universities; or of the appropriate recommendations of the Downs Commission on University Libraries; or in some other way.

In conclusion, special attention must be drawn to the Grade 12 Summer Operation.

This experimental program was mounted during July and August, 1968, for 85 students with superior scholastic records and some demonstrated maturity and character, completing Grade 12, who were nominated by principals and guidance officers in secondary schools throughout Ontario (two or three students, not more, from each school responding).

It was not a "crash" program, but rather a well-paced exposure to university conditions, with lectures, discussions, field trips, and a good deal of "innovation" by the instructors concerned (these involved senior and middle-range Brock faculty, with some experienced outsiders, e.g. in language study).

It was not a condition of joining the program that members had to give a commitment to enter university, although in fact 60 of the 85 entrants were matriculated into Brock in

September 1968. It is apparent that these students are marked by curiosity, application, co-operation and good humour; and the effect on faculty morale and student conduct in the larger forms of nearly 1150 undergraduates in the present session has been both marked and widespread.

The Senate of Brock University have resolved to have the Summer Experiment continued in 1969.

Lakehead

Preface

The body of the Special Study is composed of three parts:

II - Introduction;
III - Notes and Recommendations Concerning Emerging Universities;
Appendix - Models of University Operations Combining High Academic Quality and Financial Viability.

We propose, in what follows, to comment on the material under each of these headings.

A. INTRODUCTION

It should be noted at the outset that Lakehead University appreciates the efforts of the members of the Special Study Committee to offer constructive and suggestive guidelines for the financial operation of the emerging universities of Ontario.

It should also be noted, however, that even despite the 'flexibility' of the models suggested, there is a marked tendency in the Special Study to conceive of the emerging universities as being essentially the same kind of institutions and doing the same kind of work. Not only do we take exception to this, but we also take exception to the claim that an emerging institution, for all intents and purposes, can be compared with a segment of other and larger and emerged institutions. Further, it hardly needs to be mentioned that in terms of financial operation (except perhaps as it pertains to course proliferation in Arts and Science), the comparison of Lakehead University with a model abstracted from the operation of a few American liberal arts colleges is a gratuitous excercise.

We deny the validity of such comparisons insofar as they fail to take into account the particularity of the curriculum structure of Lakehead University given the historical and actual presence of the University Schools. Further, we object to the comparison of the financial operation of this university or parts thereof with those of portions of other universities since the costs of the latter cannot be accurately ascertained. In short, the judgement which gives rise to the expression "corresponding work" (page 4) is far too arbitrary.

The report recommends that sufficient support be provided "today to build the necessary foundation for the important role the new universities will have to carry in the future in the total system of higher education in Ontario" (page 4). An interpretation of what constitutes this "necessary foundation" is given later in the report, namely, a total program of twelve honours programs and eighteen general programs. The obvious contention underlying this interpretation is that it is redundant to have honours programs in each discipline in each university in Ontario. This contention might have some credulity if a number of the programs offered were of an esoteric nature such as Fine Art, Music, etc. However, at least at Lakehead University, this is not the case; rather, all the programs in Arts and Science offered to date are 'core programs', as it were, which are certainly not esoteric in nature.

Several related factors are relevant in this regard. Because of the unquestionable interrelatedness of different disciplines, an honours program in discipline A definitely suffers if work in an intimately related discipline B is offered only at the

general level. This difference in quality of program is not unreal both as regards the depth and nature of the work done in the particular courses, but also as regards the calibre of faculty that can be recruited. It is an indisputable fact that high calibre faculty cannot be consistently recruited to teach programs which are not given to at least the honours level.

The imbalance in the quality of the faculty which would result from the 12-18 interpretation of the expression "the necessary foundation" would be intolerable not only insofar as it diminishes the quality of the 12 honours programs as suggested above, but also in that it would lessen the quality of the 6 general programs in which honours work was not offered. Again it is indisputable that the quality of a general program is higher when work is being done at the honours level in that discipline. It cannot be the case that students at the emerging institutions must be content with general programs which are inferior to those offered at larger, emerged institutions; this would be the inevitable result of the model proposed in the report.

The "point" of emergence is another fundamental issue which requires some comment. Principally, the distinction must be made between emergence of a particular faculty and the emergence of a university as a whole; the latter without due consideration for the former, is a dangerous myth. It is dangerous precisely in that it ignores a possible inequality in the level of financial viability of different divisions within the institution. At Lakehead University this is not only a possibility but an actuality; the approximate distribution of students among the Faculty of Arts, the

Faculty of Science and the University Schools is in a ratio of 8:3:8 respectively. Now while it is probably the case that the populous programs can support the unpopulous ones within a given faculty, it is not the case that a populous faculty can support an unpopulous faculty. A minimum number of courses must be offered in each discipline in each faculty irrespective of the size of the classes, and these classes might well double their enrolment without requiring additional faculty. Hence, the question of the point of emergence of a university as a whole demands a much more sophisticated treatment than it receives in the Special Study.

Further, the report cites as evidence of emergence at fewer than 3,000 students, the "recent and current experience of some of the universities in Ontario not receiving special extra-formula support," and, it is claimed, "This experience shows effective operation of multi-faculty universities with fewer than 3,000 students without extra support" (page 6).

Several questions must be asked in this regard. Firstly, which are these institutions? (According to the Report of the Minister of University Affairs of Ontario 1967, there were no 'unemerged' provincially supported universities with an enrolment of under 3,000 students in 1967-68. Of the provincially assisted universities, only one - Waterloo Lutheran University - had an enrolment of fewer than 3,000 in 1967-68.) Secondly, how applicable is the experience of any institution which is not operated as a provincially supported university? Thirdly, how applicable is the past experience of now emerged, provincially supported universities at a time when they were either 'unemerged' or not operating under

formula financing? Curriculum changes and administrative requirements have changed very markedly in the last two years in Ontario, and these changes are reflected in higher operating expenses. Fourthly, in light of the paragraph above, what was the internal emergence picture of 'comparable' institutions - faculty by faculty - and how does this compare with that of each particular emerging institution now?

B. NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING EMERGING UNIVERSITIES

In the final section of this part of the Special Study entitled "Final Comments", the authors summarize their conclusions regarding the general strategy of development of the emerging institutions (page 13). For our part, we are in agreement regarding the necessity to restrict the proliferation of courses which are not absolutely necessary and, as well, the addition of new faculty. Further, we are in the process of examining our present offerings as regards "excessive richness." We do agree that student numbers ought to be expanded quite considerably, partly in order to increase the student-faculty ratio and the average sizes of course-sections; we are endeavouring to bring about this expansion.

However, we find the following final conclusion to be, at least potentially, problematic. The Special Study claims that the emerging universities ought to "reduce their costs per student and per student-course substantially so that they can live on formula income relatively soon." We share with the subcommittee the understanding that the provincial resources for higher education are not

unlimited and we have every incentive ourselves to reduce the above-mentioned costs. However, we are resolute in our opposition to the creation of sub-universities of the kind suggested in the models in this report, particularly as regards the retardation of the strengthening of existing 'core' programs to the honours level. By implementing such a policy, we would not only fail to achieve a sound foundation for the execution of our present and future teaching responsibilities, we would also stifle the life of this institution as a research-type university. This we will not do.

C. APPENDIX - MODELS OF UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS COMBINING HIGH ACADEMIC QUALITY AND FINANCIAL VIABILITY

It would be inappropriate to criticize the models which are outlined in the Special Study as if they were strict patterns to which the emerging universities were being told to conform. It is our understanding that they are offered merely as examples of effective operations under ideal conditions of flexibility, i.e., unlimited numbers of students to choose from so that particular enrolments within the university can be controlled, the possibility of varying the size of the faculty anywhere within the range of from 90 to 150, and a corresponding variability in the numbers of courses offered, ranging from 270 to 450. Obviously, no university has this degree of flexibility nor anything approximating it, hence the assumption that these models are not intended as 'real' options for the emerging universities of Ontario. There is a measure of control over the size of the course-sections and to a lesser degree over the student-faculty ratio and, as we have suggested above, these factors are under close scrutiny. Presumably then, the models

are intended to have a limited relevance, and it is in this light that we shall employ them.

However, there are two factors employed consistently (and as constants) in these models that do deserve some comment. The first is the "average faculty salary" of $15,000 and the second is the "average total cost per faculty member" of $25,000. The most serious implication involved in the employment of these figures lies not in their inaccuracy in our situation (although this is the case) but rather in the standard of efficiency that emerges from seeing the first as a percentage of the second. It is this erroneous efficiency standard of 60% (faculty salaries/total operating expenses) which is an unsupported assumption built into the models that causes concern. It causes concern firstly, because of its importance as a standard of efficiency, secondly, because it is built into the models as a constant and thirdly, because it is inaccurate in the context of Ontario universities, emerged and emerging alike.

One must look carefully at both sides of the ratio. On the one hand, the $15,000 is too high for the emerging universities and on the other hand, the $25,000 is too low for every institution. Further, and most significantly, when these erroneous factors are combined as a ratio, their inaccuracy is compounded.

In short, if the efficiency standard of 60% is to be seriously suggested as a criterion in determining the amount of extra-formula support for the emerging universities in Ontario, where is the evidence to support its feasibility in the actual budgeting of a non-hypothetical, Ontario institution?

D. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, we find the models suggested in the Special Study to be not only of limited relevance, but in several respects, erroneous. We flatly oppose the proposition that only two-thirds of our programs, all of which are of a fundamental non-esoteric nature, ought to be developed to the honours level. It is our policy that all such 'core' programs will be developed to at least the honours level. Further, the question of the 'point' of emergence requires a sophisticated treatment, namely, a faculty by faculty analysis. In all probability, each institution will emerge at a different total enrolment.

Lakehead University will not allow itself to become a sub-university. It will not reduce its overall costs per student and per student-course, if this must be done at the qualitative expense of the 'core' programs it is now offering. No policy will be adopted which would jeopardize either the teaching or the research life of this institution.

Finally, we are surprised that an untried assumption which is intended to be an efficiency standard for all Ontario universities, namely, that the ratio of faculty salaries to total operating expenses equals 60%, could be proposed in this report with such authority. The credibility of this report is cast in doubt by the employment of this unjustifiable formula.

While we are appreciative of the efforts of the Special Study Subcommittee in the preparation of this report, we are discontent that it was submitted to the Minister of University Affairs in its present form.

Trent

On page 13 of the Study it is stated that " ... the general strategy of development of the emerging universities in the next few years should be to limit very severely the growth of new courses and the addition of staff for undergraduate teaching; to weed out the excessiveness of course offerings which (the Committee) now finds; to expand their student numbers quite considerably so that the student-faculty ratios and the average size of course section increase substantially ... ". So far as Trent is concerned the first item is forced on the University by the present guideline formula of the Committee on University Affairs, and it is only possible to reiterate that this will be done at the serious expense of the academic quality of the University.

So far as the second point is concerned, the models in the Study are based on 12 departments offering full Honours programmes -- Trent has 12 -- , on 6 departments offering three-year programmes -- Trent has 5 -- , and on between 240 and 360 courses offered -- Trent has some 200. It should be added that, generally, a department that does not offer an Honours year does not attract many good students. This in turn reacts upon the quality of the staff willing to remain in the department, and the

spiral continues unhindered until mediocrity is achieved.

The third point is heavily dependent upon the capital financial support which the Province grants to the University, as it is not physically possible to accommodate a substantial increase in student enrolment without a similar increase in accommodation -- residential, teaching, and laboratory.

Some criticism is noted concerning the teaching load at Trent University. In particular, the Subcommittee apparently believes that the Trent system of education involves the faculty member is less time spent in essay reading and marking, whereas it is our firm belief that our system leads to more time, not less, spent in this way. The statements made on page 10 that formal teaching loads at Trent of 15, and even up to 20 hours a week would be reasonable, (and erroneously suggesting that these are typical of the general pattern at Oxford and Cambridge) can only force one to assume that members of the Subcommittee regard Trent as a form of sub-university.

A detailed analysis made at Trent indicates that at emergence and with a 1.2 average weighting, not more than 40% of operating income can be devoted to faculty salaries. References to Table A1 of the Study (suitably amended to allow for the 40% rather than the figure of 60% assumed in the Study) leads to the conclusion that the only

economically feasible model is the one based on a 20:1 student/faculty ratio, and the higher average section sizes. This in turn means that with an enrolment of 1800 students and an emerged operating income, Trent University could support only 90 faculty members and a total of 180 courses. By no stretch of the imagination could such a situation be termed academically attractive.

A comment concerning graduate students is perhaps in order. The authors of the Study suggest that graduate students create a massive drain on faculty time. This may be true if the graduate students are of poor calibre and in exceptional quantities. On the other hand a few high calibre graduate students can prove a great asset in many ways: in diminishing the gap between the student body and the faculty; in making possible student mutual education ventures; in creating a real scholastic community; and in assisting faculty members with their research and teaching.

On behalf of the many faculty members at Trent who are interested in carrying forward their own research, it should be firmly stated that a combination of high undergraduate teaching loads, no graduate students, and no special grants to support faculty research, is utterly intolerable, and will, unless steps are taken to avert it, lead to the rapid creation of institutions somewhere between

universities and CAAT's.

Finally, it should be stressed that Trent University was founded on the principle of closer student-faculty contact than is possible in most Canadian universities. The tutorial-seminar teaching pattern and the college residential system are essential items in the fulfilment of this goal which, if it can be achieved, will go a long -- perhaps all the way -- toward satisfying current and world-wide student demands.

. . . . . .

On 3 October 1968, with full knowledge and understanding of the implications of the formula financing guidelines currently adopted by the Committee of University Affairs, the Senate of Trent University unanimously adopted the following motion:

> That the Senate reaffirms the commitment of Trent University to the tutorial system.

On Monday, 7 October 1968, the financial situation facing the University over the coming five-year period was outlined frankly and fully to some forty representatives of the student body by the President, the Comptroller, and

the Dean of Arts and Science. Quoting from the report of that meeting in the 11 October issue of Arthur, the student newspaper:

> "Congress' reaction to the challenge was indicated in a motion by Champlain Cabinet Chairman, and seconded by TUCC Chairman, echoing the Senate's support for the tutorial system received strong applause from the meeting".

Part III - The Model Itself

Quoting from page 5 of the Study: "The Research Committee of the Committee of Presidents prepared a study on the subject (of emergence) which suggested emergence at a weighted enrolment of four to five thousand. This study was reviewed by the University Affairs Committee but was unconvincing because of uncertainty about some of the assumptions used, ...".

It should be pointed out in fairness that the study prepared by the Research Committee did not rest on assumptions, but on data generated from the operations of some of the now established universities.

But there must also be uncertainty about some of the assumptions used by the Subcommittee in establishing its models for the Study now under review, and specifically about the undiscussed assumption (page A 4) that "faculty salaries are 60% of total costs".

This assumption was apparently based on CAUBO statistics, which show for the financial year ending 1967, that total academic expenditures excluding library varied in Ontario from a low of 51.4% for Trent to a high of 73.6% for Queens.

This CAUBO percentage, however, includes not only faculty salaries, but also such items as support staff

salaries, research expenditures, operating scientific equipment needs, and staff benefits. The present percentage of operating income devoted to faculty salaries, both full-time and part-time, appears to be about 53 or 54% for the established Ontario universities, reducing to some 35% for such emergent universities as Brock, Erindale and Trent.

In view of the fact that such items as administrative costs and plant maintenance will need higher percentages of the total operating income in a low average weight university than in a high average weight university, it is apparent that, at emergence, faculty salaries will be a lower percentage of total operating budget in the Arts and Science universities than in the 'multiversities'. Hence it can be expected that the emergent universities will be unable to reach even the 53% or 54% figure of the presently established major Ontario universities.

This discrepancy seriously affects the conclusions that can be drawn from Table A-1, in that the only economically feasible models become those with the higher student-faculty ratios, or the higher average section size resulting from the assignment of two courses per faculty member.

Furthermore, model studies based on average course patterns are of questionable utility when considering the actual courses taken by an individual student. Although the average may be acceptable, some students will,

nevertheless, almost never be in classes of less than one hundred despite the fact that others, more fortunate, may be receiving the major portion of their class work in groups of twenty or less.